

Message Text

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PAGE 01 LISBON 03392 171915Z

43

ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 PM-03 H-02 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00

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R 171802Z JUN 75

FM AMEMBASSY LISBON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3119

INFO AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MADRID

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM

USMISSION NATO

DIA WASHDC

USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN GER

COMUSFORAZ LAJES FLD AZORES

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MADRID ALSO FOR AMBASSADOR CARLUCCI

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, PO, US

SUBJ: AZORES: PRESS ASSESSMENT

REF: (A) LISBON 3260; (B) LISBON 3262; (C) LISBON 3263

SUMMARY: TEN DAYS AFTER SEPARATIST DEMONSTRATIONS IN AZORES, MATTER HAS SUBSIDED IN LISBON PRESS. TO EXTENT THAT CAUSE OF SEPARATIST SENTIMENT IS BEING ANALYZED PUBLICLY, CHRONIC ECONOMIC UNDERDEVELOPMENT AND NEGLECT BY CENTRAL GOVERNMENT ARE FINGERED AS CULPRITS. END SUMMARY.

1. LISBON PRESS REACTION TO AZORES SEPARATIST DEMONSTRATION CONTINUES MILD WITH MUTED REFERENCE TO CONSPIRATORIAL THEMES.
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PAGE 02 LISBON 03392 171915Z

JUNE 12 SECULO ITEM IMPLICITLY CRITICIZED CALL BY PCP-LINING

MES FOR DRASTIC MEASURES TO DEAL WITH "REACTIONARY" FORCES IN ISLANDS, REFERRING TO MES PROPOSALS AS CALL "TANTAMOUNT TO MILITARY DICTATORSHIP;" JUNE 17 SECULO ARTICLE CONTAINED RETRAC-TION OF CHARGES LEVELED AGAINST SPECIFIC PERSONS, THE AUTHOR OF THESE CHARGES DISCLAIMING RESPONSIBILITY FOR HAVING INTENDED ANY "CALUMNIOUS DENUNCIATION" OF REACTIONARIES.

2. MOST DIRECT ASSOCIATION OF US WITH EVENTS WAS OBVIOUS LINK REPRESENTED BY ARREST OF PONTA DELGADA CONSULATE EMPLOYEE VICTOR CRUZ (REF B). ASIDE FROM INITIAL PRESS REPORTS, HOWEVER, CRUZ' ARREST HAS NOT DRAWN ANY SPECIAL ATTENTION. WHEN MENTIONED, US ASSOCIATION WITH DEMONSTRATION HAS BEEN IN INDIRECT TERMS -- FOR EXAMPLE, BY REFERRING TO CLOSE FAMILY TIES THAT CONNECT MOST AZOREANS WITH RELATIVES IN US.

3. IN LAST WEEK ONLY TWO LISBON NEWSPAPERS HAVE DEVOTED EXTENDED ARTICLES TO AZORES. PCP-DOMINATED "SEMPRE FIXE" CARRIED ARTICLE JUNE 14 DENOUNCING FORMATION OF AZOREAN "PHANTOM GOVERNMENT IN EXILE," LOCATED IN FRANCE. MOST OVERTLY ANTI-AMERICAN REFERENCE WAS TO SUPPORT PROVIDED AZOREAN REACTIONARIES BY "AZOREAN COLONY" IN U.S. OTHER ARTICLE APPEARED IN INDEPENDENT SOCIALIST "JOURNAL NOVO" JUNE 13.

4. JORNAL NOVO ARTICLE CONSISTED OF ROUND-TABLE DISCUSSION, INCLUDING ANTONIO BORGES COUTINHO, LEFTIST CIVIL GOVERNOR OF PONTA DELGADA WHOSE RESIGNATION WAS FORCED BY DEMONSTRATORS. PRINCIPAL POINTS MADE BY ROUND-TABLE PARTICIPANTS WERE:

A. AZORES HAVE BEEN AND CONTINUE TO BE ECONOMIC COLONY OF (MAINLAND) PORTUGAL;

B. NOTHING MUCH HAS CHANGED IN AZORES SINCE APRIL 1974 -- IT'S JUST THAT BAD CONDITIONS HAVE WORSENERED;

C. WHAT IS NEEDED MOST IS REGIONAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT; REPRESSION WILL SOLVE NOTHING; PURGING OF ISLAND OFFICIALS MUST BE DONE INTELLIGENTLY, REPLACING INCOMPETENTS WITH QUALIFIED INDIVIDUALS INSTEAD OF NEW SET OF INCOMPETENTS. (COUTINHO MADE LAST TWO OF THESE POINTS.)

D. AZOREAN SEPARATISM IS PHENOMENON WITH LONG HISTORICAL ROOTS, DERIVING FROM CHRONIC NEGLECT WITH WHICH CENTRAL GOVERNMENT HAS TREATED ISLANDS; SEPARATISM IS NOT INHERENTLY REACTIONARY, BUT CURRENT SEPARATIST MOVEMENT IS, BECAUSE OF PARTICULAR PERSONS LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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PAGE 03 LISBON 03392 171915Z

INVOLVED IN MOVEMENT.

5. COMMENT: EMBASSY'S ASSESSMENT ONE WEEK AGO OF GOP REACTION THEREFORE STANDS ESSENTIALLY UNCHANGED (REF C): GOP IS STILL DOWN-PLAYING EVENTS AND IS NOT YET ATTEMPTING EXPLOIT THEM AGAINST US. CAUTIOUS GOP APPROACH TO AZORES IS BUTTRESSED BY COUTINHO'S STATEMENT THAT REPRESSION WILL SOLVE NOTHING, THAT AZORES' POLITICAL CONSERVATISM MUST BE CURED BY ECONOMIC

DEVELOPMENT, HOWEVER BETWEEN THE INTENT TO TRY DOING SOMETHING
TO END NEGLECT AND THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A REALISTIC DEVELOPMENT
PROGRAM LIES A FINANCIAL AND PLANNING GULF GOP, ON ITS OWN,
HAS LITTLE CHANCE TO BRIDGE.
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